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STATE FOR WHA/PDA (MBUCKLEY); WHA/CEN

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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION ON DRUG TRAFFICKING, JULY 10, 2003

1. Editorial in Tegucigalpa-based moderate daily "El Herald" on 7/10 entitled "Narco trafficking and violence". "Drug trafficking not only has the power to infiltrate the government and increase corruption, it is also an instigator of violence, as it has become evident in Colombia, Brazil or Mexico."

"An accurate manifestation of the violence generated by drug trafficking is hired assassinations. About this, the Minister of Security Oscar Alvarez, has declared that drug cartels are training gang members or 'mareros' to form an army of professional assassins in Honduras, to resolve the territorial conflicts and other disagreements derived from this illegal business."

"In Honduras, violence generated by drug trafficking has not reached the extent of other countries. To avoid this, it is essential the determination of all law enforcement and judicial institutions and the collaboration of the honest citizenship in general. we still have time, but it is urgent to take the appropriate measures."

Palmer